



# CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, August 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: [www.forestparkga.gov](http://www.forestparkga.gov)  
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>  
Phone Number: (404) 366.4720

**FOREST PARK CITY HALL**  
745 Forest Parkway  
Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James  
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez  
The Honorable Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine  
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager  
Randi Rainey, City Clerk  
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

## APPROVED MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK:** A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director; Nigel Watley, Deputy Public Works Director; Fire Fire Chief David Halcomb; Fire Chief May; Ioana Armstrong, Fire Dept; Nicole Dozier, PCD Director; Josh Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Javon Lloyd, PIO; Derry Walker, Code Enforcement Director Marselles Williams, Economic Director; Brandon Criss, Police Dept.; Major Jones, Police Dept; Dorothy Roper-Jackson, Court Director, Tarik Maxwell, Recreation and Leisure Director; and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

### ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to adopt the consent agenda as printed.

The motion was made by Councilmember Antoine and seconded by Councilmember James.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:**

It was moved to adopt the agenda with the following changes to split item #7 into two, making it items #7a and item #7b.

The motion was made by Councilmember Antoine and seconded by Councilmember James.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA: There was no discussion on these items.**

- 1. Council Discussion of Economic Development Surplused Office Furniture-Economic Development Department**

##### **Background/History:**

The Economic Development Staff Assistant & Project Manager worked in the same office. The Project Manager is now the Main Street Manager and needs an individual office with a meeting area. The desks & chairs they use now need to be surplused. The Staff Assistant will move, and a new office will be created for them.

- 2. Council Discussion to Install Dash Cameras-Police Department**

##### **Background/History:**

The Forest Park Police Department remains steadfast in its commitment to transparency and accountability, recognizing these values as fundamental to building trust with our community and stakeholders. To further this commitment, we have integrated the use of body cameras and dash cameras across our fleet. These tools are instrumental in documenting interactions, ensuring adherence to protocols, and providing objective evidence in various scenarios.

The Forest Park Police Department procured a set of dash cameras in previous years. However, it has come to our attention that a portion of this order—specifically 25 dash cameras—was not received then. We have since resolved this issue and received the outstanding 25 cameras.

This request to council is to have them installed by Prologic ITS, which is on Statewide Contract with a SWC#99999-SPD-SPD0000210-0014. This will be funded from the DEA Justice Account.

- 3. Council Discussion to Condemn Real Property Located at 765 Forest Pkwy- Executive Offices**

##### **Background/History:**

As a part of the City of Forest Park's City Center initiative, staff have been working on finalizing the preliminary plans for the City Center to house the City Hall, Municipal Court, Police Headquarters, Recreation Facility, and Senior Center. The current plans incorporate the adjacent, undeveloped lot physically situated between

City Hall and the Annex Building 765 and 785 Forest Parkway. City Staff deems it in the City's best interests to adopt the attached Resolution, which would authorize the acquisition of 765 Forest Parkway by way of negotiated purchase or by eminent domain if necessary.

The City Council previously adopted Resolution 2024-15 to condemn the site. However, the addresses listed for the multiple owners in the title report were, unfortunately, outdated. The City Attorney's Office had to retain a private investigator to find the current addresses of the owners. Now that additional notice has been provided, the City Council needs to adopt this updated resolution to condemn the property.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **4. Council Discussion on the Rollover of 457(b) Plan Funds – Executive Offices**

##### **Background/History:**

Recent discussions and feedback have emphasized the need to provide employees with flexibility in managing their retirement funds. Unvested employees are not permitted to roll over their 401(a) plan funds into the new GMA pension plan. Given the guidance from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) regarding future opportunities to buy back years of service, there is an opportunity to address this.

**City Manager, Mr. Clark, Jr.-** Noted that the city started an official pension plan effective as of August 1, 2024. He also noted that staff is seeking to develop a policy not to allow employees to get leverage of the 457b funds when they are not vested. Mr. Clark, Jr. stated that staff are requesting to keep it the same way as the pension plan, whereas the employees can only use years of service that are vested for the 457b. Mr. Clark Jr. explained that the 401a plan, in which those employees invested in a 401a, are eligible to roll over those funds to the new GMA pension plan. He mentioned that, currently, the city matches 1/2 of a percent of the 10% of the employee's weekly contribution. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that the easiest way Ms. Diane Lewis from HR explained it is that it's 10% on \$1 up to 10%, along with the 457 funds. Mr. Clark Jr. mentioned that the window opens at the beginning of September through the end of October, and staff is seeking direction from the council to only allow vested employees to roll over their 401a plan fund, and all employees can leverage their 457b funds. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is working on an actuarial calculation for those years of service, and the HR department should have that information sometime before the end of the year.

##### **Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** inquired about the employees and the vesting period. Mr. Clark Jr. explained that it is a business decision. Seeing that the funds in the 457b and those in the 401 a do not go anywhere, the employees essentially have two plans: one they contribute to and the other they voluntarily invest in. Mr. Bailey, Empower Representative, noted that the vesting period is five years.

#### **5. Council Discussion on Rental Assistance for Forest Station–Executive Offices**

##### **Background/History:**

Forest Station, a community with a significant population of senior residents, has recently implemented rental increases due to inflationary pressures and rising maintenance costs. Many of these seniors live on fixed incomes and are particularly vulnerable to these cost increases, risking displacement or financial hardship.

It is proposed that the City Council approve the allocation of ARPA funds to establish a rental assistance program specifically for seniors at Forest Station. The program will provide temporary financial support to cover the difference between the current rent and the increased rent amount for eligible seniors.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** noted that the legacy residents 55 and older at Forest Station had seen an increase in rental rates, and without extra money coming in for the legacy residents, staff would like to find a way to help give them a one-time buyout and help mitigate the rental increases by using the remaining ARPA funds that were allocated to address some of the economic challenges brought on by Covid.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** stated that Councilmember Akins-Wells inquired why it should not be done for all in the community. Mr. Clark Jr. mentioned that the Forest Station rental rate increase is not based on inflation but on forecasting rental rates and expenditures during COVID-19. Mr. Clark further explained that there were some delays before Forest Station's opening based on the pandemic, and fast forward to the present day. It's a situation where they're just doing their first calculation. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that if other community members are seeking said rental assistance related to COVID-19, a portal will be set up and launched in the next week or so, and those individuals can apply. Mr. Clark emphasizes that it's very specific and that it must be related to the COVID-19 pandemic, or the challenges brought on by that. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that this program would cover the difference between the previous rental and the new increment increase rates. Staff recommends that the funds not go to the residents but to forestation management to augment the cost of that rental increase and cap this program for an amount not exceeding 50,000. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that when staff pulled back the funds of \$ 50,000 for City View, they pulled the funds back with an appropriation of \$50,000 for those in need. Mr. Clark Jr. noted the request staff has been seeing is that it's not individuals who have missed rent because of COVID-related things or were not able to articulate it that way; he also noted this as an attempt to try to help our esteemed legacy resident population.

#### **Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James-** expressed her anger and noted that she agrees that the funds need to be utilized in the way the government intended to relate to COVID-19. However, increasing the rent in a newly developed community that has had challenges upsets her. Councilmember James noted that she would support ensuring that the residents have relief and do not have to go through things like this.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** stated that he and Mayor Butler read emails sent and got to hear from a fraction of their community after the issues they were having. But since then, the developer has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to make good on some of the promises and commitments made to the residents. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that staff will go back to meet with the residents at the end of the month to get an actual update. Mr. Clark Jr. mentioned that the price of rent is decreasing, and the staff is asking for an amount not to exceed because the staff knows that they even lowered that cap.

**Councilmember James-** mentioned that they could have an amount that was so great to increase, and they could come down and let her know they didn't have to go up in the first place.

**Councilmember Antione-** inquired about receiving feedback. Mr. Clark Jr. noted it would be contingent upon the vote and noted staff will still have the secondary meeting with the community towards the end of the month.

**Councilmember Gutierrez-** noted needing to be intentional as an elected official, and most of the calls that he gets are mostly about renters and constituents complaining about their landlords raising their

rent. Councilmember Gutierrez stated that it was happening to everyone and wanted to know if there was a tax incentive or a home-buying program the city could work with.

**Mr. Clark Jr.**- Noted under current Georgia law, municipalities and counties are preempted from enacting rent control or rent regulation according to ordinance OCGA 44- 7-19. He stated that it prohibited local control from the government from regulating that rent and believed that the city of Forest Park, in fact, tried to put forth legislation through the General Assembly to regulate the park and the crisis.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells-** said she believes in holding people accountable and not try to make up for mistakes that they have made. She also noted she doesn't feel one group of seniors should be taken care of, especially since they were not there during COVID-19. Councilmember Akins-Wells mentioned that the residents of Governor Dr have also complained about rental prices for years, and this has been ignored. She feels uncomfortable assisting new residents when the existing residents have not been taken care of, and if the city is going to get into the rental assistance business to make sure to take care of the residents who have been living in the city longer. Councilmember Akins-Wells expressed she wants the process to be fair and does not want the city to continue getting into the rental system business; she understands everyone needs help, and if everyone cannot be helped, to hold them accountable.

**Mr. Clark Jr.**- noted the current administration would like to help as many residents as possible and does not mind meeting with individuals on Governor's Dr. to see what type of assistance could be provided. He also noted having \$50,000 appropriated for rental assistance.

**Mayor Butler** reiterated the rental assistance portal opening soon as well as O.C.G.A 44-7-19 and mentioned that State Representative Eric Bell did try putting forth legislation on the rental assistance cap; however, it did not get much traction. She encouraged everyone to reach out to State Representative Eric Bell to try to push the bill once more with community support.

**6. Council Discussion to enter into a contract with A Better Sign to construct and install five (5) monument signs in City Parks- Executive Offices**

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park received sealed bids from prospective contractors for the City's Park Monument Signs project on July 11, 2024. The City received five (5) Bids, and A Better Sign was the lowest bidder at \$176,000.00. The work consists of furnishing and installing all materials, labor, tools, equipment, and related services required for a complete project. This project includes but is not limited to providing the construction of a complete installation of five (5) "Monument Signs" at park locations within the city.

Work will include all traffic control, demolition, erosion and sediment control, clearing/trimming, grading, signage, landscaping, and all other activities and appurtenances to provide a complete "Forest Park—Monument Signs" project in Forest Park, Georgia.

**Mr. Geeter, Procurement Manager-** noted that a considerable number of people were invested in the bid, which went from 176,000 to 378,000. Staff felt the need to go to the lowest bidder.

**Mr. Clark Jr.**- noted that the council directed staff to provide a bid chart that lists all the individuals that bid, and it was not included in the packets and requested to table this item until the chart is provided.

7a. **Council Discussion of a Budget Amendment and Policy for Donations and Contributions-Finance Department**

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park's FY24-25 Operating Budget was unanimously adopted by the city council on June 17th, 2024. Prior to the budget's adoption, city staff advised that funding and revenues would be continuously monitored for accuracy and reporting purposes.

Staff now recommend adding the understated funds to the Events Donations revenue line, increasing the previously adopted amount from \$2,000.00 to \$10,500.00. Additionally, it is recommended that the expenditure line for City Events-Ward 4 be increased from \$45,000.00 to \$53,500.00.

**Mr. Wiggins, Finance Director**, noted increasing the current budget of \$2,000.00 for donations in the revenue line to the amended budget, which is going to be \$10,500.00, due to the city receiving additional funds in private. He also mentioned that staff will collect data, and if anyone else receives any other funds, they are going to do the same. Mr. Wiggins noted the expenditures are going to increase and will be able to take care of and spend those funds. Mr. Wiggins noted that the budget is going to go from \$45,000.00 to \$53,500.00.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** noted staff has always received sponsorships and contributions behind the scenes, but how it was computed was inaccurate. He noted that the way the money was coming in and the invoices were paid down was incorrect. He mentioned that it should be done to increase the lines based on additional understated revenue, the revenue side, and the expenditure line.

**Mr. Wiggins-** noted moving forward, staff wants to make sure that the dollars are spent out of the correct line, which is going to be the expense line.

7b. **Council Discussion on a Policy for Donations and Contributions-Finance Department**

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park's FY24-25 Operating Budget was unanimously adopted by the city council on June 17th, 2024. Prior to the budget's adoption, city staff advised that funding and revenues would be continuously monitored for accuracy and reporting purposes.

Staff now recommend adding the understated funds to the Events Donations revenue line, increasing the previously adopted amount from \$2,000.00 to \$10,500.00. Additionally, it is recommended that the expenditure line for City Events-Ward 4 be increased from \$45,000.00 to \$53,500.00.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Antoine-** inquired if it was across the board. Mr. Wiggins noted that this is going to be the first, and staff will do this going forward for everybody because everybody gets donations that need to be appropriated.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells-** thanked Mr. Wiggins for the clarification.

8. **Council Discussion on the Municipal Court Solicitor's Contract (Rene Marierose)-Municipal Court Department**

**Background/History:**

Attorney Rene Marierose is the Solicitor for the City of Forest Park Municipal and Environmental Courts. Solicitor Rene Marierose has been contracted with the City for two (2) years. The contract expired in May of 2024, and he is seeking renewal of his contract. The term of this agreement shall be renewed for a subsequent one (1) calendar year term for a period not to exceed four (4) calendar renewal years in total. The City or the Solicitor may terminate prior to the end of the term year for good cause only. "Good Cause" is defined in Exhibit A, which is attached. The City is proposing an 8.33% increase to his yearly salary.

**Ms. Roper-Jackson, Municipal Court Director**—noted attorney Marie Rose has been with the municipal and environmental courts for over two years and is seeking to renew his contract. The term of this agreement will be one year, not to exceed four years. The city is also proposing an 8.33% 8.33% increase, which is the yearly salary I have earned in almost 40 years of working in the criminal justice system.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James-** inquired why the contract stated that it would not exceed four years. Ms. Roper-Jackson noted that the contract is for one year and will roll over automatically; within four years, staff will revisit the contract.

**Mayor Butler-** asked City Attorney Matricardi for clarification on subsequent rollovers and mentioned she thought they were for three years or due to his position being different. Attorney Matricardi noted that Attorney Marierose's position was different and noted its one-year terms, up to four years.

9. **Council Discussion for renovation/expansion of the "old" jail area within the Police Department. Two quotes were received. Recommend award to lowest, responsive, and responsible bidder: Accurate Property Services for an amount not to exceed \$15,800.70-Police Department**

**Background/History:**

The Forest Park Police Department continues to experience growth, with nearly all positions filled at its current location. However, the building continues to age, and space is becoming increasingly limited. To address this challenge, the department has identified a potential office space that can be utilized. This space requires minor renovations, including new carpeting, paint, lighting, and ceiling tiles. Once the renovations are complete, the office will be able to accommodate three of our employees.

**Ms. Adams, Procurement Manager-** noted the procurement department released a request for public request for quotes on the website. The city received three (3) bidders who came into a mandatory bid at the site to look at the location. Mrs. Adams noted two of those bidders provided a quote in time when the quotes closed, and the staff went with the lowest responsive and responsible bidding.

10. **Council Discussion for a Partnership with Change Center Mentoring Group – Recreation and Leisure Services Department**

**Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park (Recreation and Leisure Services Department), along with the Change Center Mentoring Group, are in collaboration to provide mentorship and guidance to at-risk youth within the Forest Park Community through a mentoring program. The mentoring program is designed to provide a

safe and supportive environment while encouraging personal and academic growth, community involvement, and service among mentees. Within this partnership, The City of Forest Park will provide the use of the facilities at 696 Main St. at no charge to host mentoring sessions and activities. If approved, this partnership will go into effect on August 12, 2024, and remain in effect for a period of one year unless terminated with a 30-day written notice.

**Mr. Maxwell, Director of Rec & Leisure-** noted the department is looking to expand the brand with the city of Forest Park Recreation leisure services by providing physical and mental, financial, and emotional activities for our youth. He also noted that the kids were mainly out of the Forest Park Community, and that's what staff is trying to start at and expand from.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James-** asked how they were going to go about getting mentorship for people who needed it and noted speaking with a young man who needed one. Mr. Maxwell noted that they have now met most of the kids through the park and partnerships. Councilmember James asked if the staff had the capacity. Mr. Maxwell noted that they do not; however, they have enough to get it started and get the word out.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells-** mentioned seeing a Facebook post of a parent expressing issues with their kids.

**Councilmember James** inquired about the age group. Mr. Maxwell noted that it is 11-18 years old.

**Mr. Clark Jr.-** noted he wanted to make certain that if the city is partnering with an entity for a partnership from this point forward, all those requests will come to the governing body. He believes that the Governing Body establishes fees, and the governing body should be the only entity that weighs in. Mr. Clark noted that regardless of who the city partners with, the number one goal is ensuring that the city is protecting its assets and any liability issues.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate).

It was moved to end the work session meeting at 6:40 p.m.

The motion was made by Councilmember Mears and Seconded by Councilmember James.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

Mayor Butler then stated there was an executive session for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate.

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 6:42 p.m.

The motion was made by Councilmember James.

There was no formal vote.

It was moved to recess into Executive Session at 6:42 p.m. for Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate matters.



The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

It was moved to reconvene the work session at 6:53 p.m.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Antoine.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

**In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at 404-366-4720 at least 24 hours before the meeting.**